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S E C R E T ABU DHABI 00713

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ACTION: AMB
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TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 8193
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S E C R E T SECTION 01 OF 02 ABU DHABI 000713

SIPDIS

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NSC FOR PATRICK HEFFERNAN

E.O. 12958: DECL: 02/15/2015
TAGS: [IR](#) [IZ](#) [PREL](#) [PTER](#) [SA](#) [TC](#)
SUBJECT: WHITE HOUSE HOMELAND SECURITY ADVISOR FRAN
TOWNSEND MEETS UAE STATE SECURITY DIRECTOR

Classified By: (U) Classified by Ambassador Michele J. Sison for reason
s 1.4 (b) and (d).

¶1. (S) Summary. In a February 7 meeting with HSC Homeland Security Advisor Frances Townsend, the Director of UAE State Security Department (SSD), Sheikh Hazza bin Zayed Al-Nahyan, expressed support for U.S. efforts regarding the Israeli/Palestinian situation. Sheikh Hazza also said that the UAEG desired a diplomatic solution to the problems in Iran regarding state sponsorship of terrorism and nuclear weapons development. In a discussion about the roots of terrorism, Sheikh Hazza explained that the UAE is working to help mosques serve as positive education centers so that they do not become breeding grounds for extremism. He also stated that in order to prevent charitable donations from funding terrorist activity, the UAE has established government-monitored donation locations so that charitable giving is regulated and disbursements are controlled. Finally, Sheikh Hazza thanked the U.S. for its cooperation with the SSD, and he noted that he wishes to enhance the cooperation between the UAE and the other GCC security services. On Hizbollah, Sheikh Hazza agreed to ongoing operational cooperation in the UAE targeting Hizbollah and Iranian MOIS. End summary.

¶2. (S//NF) Meeting participants included senior members from the SSD, EB Assistant Secretary Anthony Wayne, DCM Albright, NSC and S/CT staffers, RMAS chief, and econoff.

Middle East Peace Process

¶3. (U) Sheikh Hazza said that he trusts the U.S. and knows we are doing the best we can to advance peace between Israel and

the Palestinians. The UAEG recognizes that the Palestinian leadership needs international assistance to gain legitimacy and to counter HAMAS and the Palestinian Islamic Jihad. UAE leaders want play a positive role in this process. The Palestinian people are suffering, he said, and the UAE, with its sizable Palestinian population, wants to help stabilize the situation and provide assistance to Palestinians in need. Townsend thanked the UAEG for its leadership on the Palestinian issue, and she stressed U.S. commitment to working toward a two-state solution.

Iran

¶4. (S) Townsend emphasized that Iran must stop sponsoring terrorism and cease its support of Hizballah. We cannot let them be the spoiler of the peace process. She added that the U.S. would appreciate any assistance the UAE could provide in this regard. Sheikh Hazza observed that his government hopes for a diplomatic solution to the problems with Iran. He emphasized that any confrontation with Iran would cause internal problems in the UAE, due to Iran,s proximity and the UAE,s large Iranian community. Sheikh Hazza said the UAE is concerned there may be a U.S. military confrontation over Iran,s nuclear weapons program. He referred to a newspaper article that said Iran would unleash terrorism with &ten million suicide bombers8 if the U.S. attacked Iran. Townsend reassured Sheikh Hazza that the United States is committed to solving the situation with Iran diplomatically, but needs UAE assistance with both intelligence and diplomacy.

¶5. (S//NF) Sheikh Hazza told Townsend that his government recognizes Iran is developing nuclear weapons, and he assured her that the UAEG is aggressively working with RMAS to stop any suspected transshipments through the UAE of nuclear weapons components to Iran.

Muslim Extremism / Terrorist Financing

¶6. (C) Discussing the sources of extremism, Sheikh Hazza described challenges facing imams in mosques throughout the region. He noted that imams are responsible for seeing to every aspect of a mosque,s operations) from the sermons down to the cleaning) and that they do not always have time to focus on preventing people from exploiting their mosques. He explained that many of the young men who end up involved with terrorists are not intrinsically bad people. They are simply devoted Muslims that get drawn into and exploited by extremist circles. To address this challenge, he said, the UAEG had initiated programs to assist imams and help develop mosques into positive education centers. (Note: In the UAE, all Sunni imams are employees of the individual emirates or of the Federal Ministry of Justice, Islamic Affairs, and Endowments, which draft, distribute, and monitor their sermons and regulate their actions.)

¶7. (C) Sheikh Hazza observed that Muslims, generosity and their required zakat (charitable giving) has inadvertently continued to provide terrorists with financial support. He said that with so many charities and ways that people can donate money, ordinary people often do not know that their donations are going to support terrorism. Sheikh Hazza said that the UAEG had established Zakat Houses * donation locations where the government ensures the money is distributed to legitimate causes. Although these houses were established two years ago, he acknowledged that it takes people time to get used to these new donation sites and that it was possible that people were still donating money to individual fundraisers or charities that may not be following regulations, including the required registration with the UAEG. This was a matter of continued focus for his service.

¶8. (C) In addition to expressing appreciation for UAEG efforts to ensure that charities are not abused by terrorists, Townsend thanked Sheikh Hazza for UAEG leadership on regulating cash couriers and hawaladars. She told him that during her meetings with Saudi officials at the recent

counterterrorism conference in Riyadh, she had encouraged the Saudis to approach the UAE for guidance on how to address the challenge of regulating cash couriers.

USG/UAE and UAE/Regional Cooperation

¶9. (S) Sheikh Hazza told Townsend that he was very grateful for the level of cooperation and the close relationship between the SSD and the USG. He said that cooperation and trust are excellent, and that whenever the SSD needs assistance, he knows he can ask for it. He also said that he wants to enhance the cooperation between his service and the other security services in the Gulf. He noted that the Saudis do not release information about their citizens to UAE officials, and he said that it is particularly important that the SAG share this information when suspected Saudi extremists move around in the region.

Atmospherics

¶10. (S) Sheikh Hazza and Townsend quickly established a comfortable rapport, picking up threads of their conversation from their last meeting in October 2004. The atmosphere of the meeting was warm and relaxed, and Sheikh Hazza went out of his way to underscore the commonality of our interests and the closeness of the relationship with the Embassy.

¶11. (U) This cable has been cleared by Homeland Security Advisor Townsend and Assistant Secretary for Economic and Business Affairs Wayne.
SISON